

JAN 28 2000

EIS001549

MICHAEL SKINDELL: Good afternoon. I am Michael J. Skindell and I am here today as a Councilman at large for the City of Lakewood. I'm pleased to follow one of my constituents, Chris Trepal, who works with the Earth Day Coalition. I want to begin my comments by commending U.S. Congressman, Dennis J. Kucinich, for requesting the U.S. Department of Energy to conduct a hearing in Northeast Ohio on the Draft EIS. And commending the Department of Energy for agreeing to conduct a hearing in this region. The decision to hold this public hearing in Cleveland is an acknowledgement that transportation of cargo containing high-level radioactive waste will likely have an environmental impact on the population of this region.

The City of Lakewood is a quiet working class community located just west of Cleveland. With a population of 59,718, according to the 1990 U.S. Census contained in a 5.6 square mile area, Lakewood is the most densely populated community between New York City and Chicago. Our community has respectable property values and the residents enjoy a high quality of life.

The proposal to ship high-level radioactive waste from the nation's commercial nuclear plants to the Yucca Mountain Radioactive Waste Repository in Nevada, would certainly lessen the quality of life treasured by Lakewood citizens.

Although the DOE has not made any commitments as to the specific routes, waste volumes, or timing of this dangerous shipping campaign; it is clear that routes through the heart of the City of Lakewood, because of its unique location, are most likely to be the favored routes for this proposal. Transecting the Lakewood community is the Nickel Plate rail line utilized by both Norfolk Southern and CSX. There are 27 rail/street crossings on this line in the City of Lakewood. In the City of Lakewood alone, the rail line goes through the backyards of hundreds of single family and multiple family homes. The rail tracks are located next the Westerly and North Westerly, a housing complex for senior citizens, and run along several secondary school buildings. Highway commercial traffic traveling west from the east coast utilizes I-90, which runs along the southern border of Lakewood. Like many residents of Cleveland, Lakewood, Rocky River and Westlake, I can stand on my front porch and watch traffic on I-90. Should this section of I-90 be utilized, this high-level radioactive waste would be transported within several hundred feet of thousands of homes.

Transportation of this waste through the populated areas of Northeast Ohio would be irresponsible and demonstrate the lack of concern for respecting the peace of mind of tens of thousands of citizens. Implementation of such a proposal would be another attack on the aging inner ring suburbs such as Lakewood. Exposing our citizens to the danger of transporting high-level radioactive waste would most certainly result in our citizens moving to areas away from the transportation routes. Who would want to have their children play in back yards through which massive amounts of nuclear waste are passing? Who would want to have their children go to school where the schoolhouses are located within feet of rail tracks on which deadly waste is being transported?

As an elected councilman representing nearly 60,000 citizens, the most significant concern I have is emergency response to a radiological accident. Lakewood is not equipped with a nuclear response team. Rocky River is not equipped with a nuclear response team. Berea, Bay

3 cont. Village and Westlake are not quipped with nuclear response teams. Our communities struggle to repair our aging streets and water lines and do not have the money to staff and equip nuclear response teams. Yet it is our emergency units that will be first at a scene of a nuclear accident. What will protect these public servants who continually put their lives on the line for the citizens of our communities from the effects of being exposed to a nuclear accident in which the rail cars or highway trucks are engulfed in flames? What knowledge will they have of a deadly cargo being transported upon the arrival at the scene of an accident?

2 cont. On Tuesday, January 18th, 2000 in a general meeting of Lakewood City Council, open to the public, our council voted unanimously to oppose the transportation of high-level nuclear wastes through Lakewood. I am proud today to deliver to you a resolution approved by council and signed by our Mayor, Madeline Cain, opposing this effort. The resolution is attached to my comments which I submitted to the moderator. As responsible elected officials, we do not want to see a shifting of burdens from one populous community to another. This waste should not and must not be shipped through populated regions of the country.

4... Should our federal government implement a disposal plan for a storage plant for this deadly waste which results in its transportation through populated areas such as Northeast Ohio, the DOE and the United States Congress should ensure the following: One, that communities are notified at least two weeks in advance of the date, time and manner of a shipment of such waste through a particular community.

3 cont. Two, that the federal government fully ensure the funding of the establishment of nuclear response teams that are able to respond to nuclear accidents within five minutes.

4 cont. Three, that regulations are written to provide appropriate signage on trucks and rail cars to clearly notify the public and our emergency response teams of the hazardous cargo.

Four, that regulations are written to provide for a safe speed in which trucks and rail cars carry such cargo through our communities.

Five, that regulations are written to provide for the training and certification of those transporting this cargo through our communities.

3 cont. Six, that the federal government fully funds training of hospital personnel in communities through which this cargo may pass.

5 Most importantly, the Department of Energy and the U.S. Congress must take every necessary step to ensure that we leave our planet to our children in a better condition than we found it.